

REMARKS

The office action September 7, 2004, has been reviewed and its contents carefully noted. Reconsideration of this case, as amended, is requested. Claims 1 through 29 remain in this case, with claims 1, 5, 12, 21, 22, 23, and 25 being amended by this response.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. §103

All of the existing claims, including all of the independent claims are finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Humpleman* in view of *Abraham* and further in view of *Buckley* '840 and/or *Buckley* '089. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this final rejection, and believes that all of the claims are patentable over the art cited, individually and in combination, for the reasons given in the prior Office Action response, the arguments set forth therein being hereby incorporated by reference

As to *Humpleman* in particular, a summary of our objections to the use of *Humpleman* in this case are set forth in the first paragraph beginning on page 15 of the last Office Action response:

Thus, in conclusion, it is clear that the Examiner has incorrectly applied the *Humpleman* reference for the purposes of this case. *Humpleman* suggests a limited purpose NIU functioning directly with end devices serviced by the network as well as with STEs. This is contrary to the teachings of the instant invention with regard to its Main node. The main mode of the instant invention functions with all end devices in the network via access nodes. *Humpleman* also suggests a limited purpose STE that does not interface with all of the end devices serviced by the network. This is contrary to the teachings of the instant invention with regard to its access nodes. Overall, the application of *Humpleman* completely misses the point of the instant invention, compares a transparent with a non-transparent system, involves elements (particularly STEs) that are not analogous or comparable to the elements of the instant invention, and is otherwise is inapt and should be withdrawn.

However, the original claims and the amendments made to the claims did not, to the Examiner's mind, incorporate the foregoing observations. Thus, at page 18 of the instant office action the Examiner remarked:

Some other features explained in the remarks by the Applicant are disclosed in the specification of the instant application, but not expressed in the claims discussed above. If some of the features of the instant application are indeed novel, the Applicant must provide

more detail and structure of the novel features into the claims discussed above in order to overcome the references used in combination. . . .

In view of the foregoing remarks, the applicant has made further amendments to overcome the primary reference—Humpleman. The aforesaid modifications make it clear that (1) signals for different types of devices are sent via the main input node to (2) all of the access nodes with (3) each access node being arranged for connection to all of the different types of devices so that each access node can connect to a device allowing access to any signal originally received by the main input node. In other words, generally speaking, all access nodes receive all signals and are adapted to connect to all devices.

In contrast to this, Humpleman's signals are switched by his "main input node(s)" and sent to different "access nodes" depending on the signal—i.e.—all "access nodes" do not receive all signals. Likewise, in Humpleman, different "access nodes" are not adapted to connect to different types of devices capable of receiving all of the signals originally received by the main mode. This would be superfluous in Humpleman because not all "access nodes" receive all signals. Humpleman's "access nodes" need only interface with devices intended to receive the types of signals sent to that particular "access node" by Humpleman's "main input node(s)".

Amendment in accordance with the foregoing principles was approved as a basis for overcoming the references by the Examiner in a telephonic conference with the undersigned subject to the filing of this Request for Continuing Examination and the Examiner's re-searching of the subject matter as so amended.

It is, therefore, believed that the aforesaid amendments more carefully distinguish over the art cited and the claims should now be allowed. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

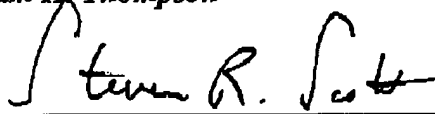
Conclusion

Applicant believes the claims, as amended, are patentable over the prior art, and that this case is now in condition for allowance of all claims therein. Such action is thus respectfully requested. If the Examiner disagrees, or believes for any other reason that direct contact with Applicants' attorney would advance the prosecution of the case to finality, he is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

"Recognizing that Internet communications are not secured, I hereby authorize the PTO to communicate with me concerning any subject matter of this application by electronic mail. I understand that a copy of these communications will be made of record in the application file."

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